

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-14 SAA-01 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-20 OMB-01 AID-05 /118 W
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R 201814Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5429
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MADRID 08318

E.O. 11652: N.A.
TAGS: MR, AG, MO, SS, SP
SUBJECT: SPANISH PRESS INTERVIEW WITH SALEK

1. SUMMARY: IN AN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED JULY 20 IN A MADRID DAILY, NEW MAURITANIAN PRESIDENT MOUSTAPHA OULD MOHAMMED SALEK UNDERLINED MAURITANIA'S DESIRE FOR PEACE, WHICH HE THOUGHT SHOULD BENEFIT EVERYONE IN THE REGION, PRAISED THE "PERFECT UNDERSTANDING" WITH MOROCCO, WAFFLED A QUESTION ON THE FUTURE OF THE MADRID AGREEMENTS, AND EXPRESSED HOPE FOR EVENTUAL COOPERATION AMONG ALL THE PARTIES INVOLVED. SALEK DENIED IDEAS OF REPLACING MOROCCAN TROOPS IN MAURITANIA WITH SOME OTHER (SUCH AS AN INTER-AFRICAN) FORCE, BUT RECALLED HASSAN'S REPEATEDLY STATED DISPOSITION TO WITHDRAW HIS TROOPS ON MAURITANIAN REQUEST. SALEK EXPRESSED HOPE FOR EVENTUAL COOPERATION AMONG ALL THE GROUPS OF THE REGION, CALLED MAURITANIA'S POSITION REGARDING SPAIN UNCHANGED, AND ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SPAIN, HAVING FRIENDS IN THE REGION, MIGHT HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY IN THE SEARCH FOR
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PEACE. END SUMMARY.

2. THE MADRID DAILY EL PAIS JULY 20 PUBLISHED THE FOLLOWING INTERVIEW BETWEEN SALEK AND THE PAPER'S SPECIAL ENVOY TO NOUAKCHOTT, DOMINGO DEL PINO:

3. BEGIN TEXT: QUESTION: IN NOUAKCHOTT, TWO THINGS

ARE BEING SAID: MAURITANIA WANTS TO END THE WAR, AND WANTS TO DO IT IN COLLABORATION WITH MOROCCO. AT SOME PRESENT OR FUTURE MOMENT DOES THE MAURITANIAN GOVERNMENT BELIEVE IT SHOULD NEGOTIATE OR KNOW THE POINTS OF VIEW OF ALGERIA AND OF THE POLISARIO?

4. ANSWER: INDEED, MAURITANIA WANTS A SOLUTION TO THE WAR TO BE FOUND. NATURALLY, AND YOU YOURSELF HAVE SAID IT, IT WANTS THE ENTIRETY OF THE PROBLEM TO BE CARRIED OUT WITH ITS ASSOCIATE, MOROCCO. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT IF THERE IS PEACE, THIS PEACE SHOULD BENEFIT EVERYBODY, AND IN THIS PART OF THE MAGHREB FOR THERE TO BE PEACE IT IS NECESSARY THAT THERE EXIST A PERFECT UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA ON ONE SIDE-- AND THANK GOD, THAT IS THE CASE AT THIS TIME-- AND IT IS NECESSARY, NATURALLY, THAT THE OTHER INTERLOCUTORS OF THE REGION PARTICIPATE, BENEFIT, AND LIVE THIS PEACE, AND I AM REFERRING PARTICULARLY TO ALGERIA.

5. Q: ENDING THE WAR IMPLIES, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, THE REVISION OF AGREEMENTS ALREADY CONCLUDED, SUCH AS, FOR EXAMPLE, THE MADRID TRIPARTITE AGREEMENTS OF 1975?

6. A: THE AGREEMENTS ARE NOTHING MORE THAN A MEANS, THE MAKING CONCRETE OF CERTAIN COMPROMISES IN THE UNCLASSIFIED

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FACE OF A GIVEN SITUATION. THE WILL OF PEOPLES IS SOMETHING THAT EVOLVES AND WHICH ADAPTS ITSELF TO THE TIMES, AND I THINK THAT IN THIS THERE IS NO CONTRADICTION. HISTORY IS A SERIES OF CONTINUITIES, EVENTS, AND PHASES, AND THE ESSENTIAL THING IS NOT TO ACCEPT THAT HISTORY PASS US BY. THE SOLUTION TO PROBLEMS IS LINKED AND MOVED, IN PARTICULAR, BY THE SUPREME INTEREST OF THE PEOPLE.

7. Q: IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT EX-PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH WAS THE OBSTACLE TO PEACE. PEACE, HOWEVER, HAS ITS OWN LIMITS. CAN'T THIS GOVERNMENT, WITH REGARD TO WAR AND PEACE, ARRIVE AT A SITUATION SIMILAR TO THAT OF THE PREVIOUS REGIME?

8. A: I HAVE REFUSED UP TO NOW TO PUT THE OLD GOVERNMENT ON TRIAL BECAUSE I CONSIDER THAT IT SANK ITSELF, IT TIRED, AND SHOWED A NOTORIOUS INCAPACITY, THAT EVERYONE CONFIRMS, WITH RESPECT TO THE COMPLEX OF PROBLEMS WHICH IT HAD TO CONFRONT. THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT CONFRONTS ALL THE PROBLEMS WITH DETERMINATION, BUT ALSO WITH THE PRUDENCE THE SITUATION REQUIRES.

THAT IS TO SAY, BY MEANS OF DIALOGUE, UNDERSTANDING,
AND DISCUSSION TO ARRIVE AT SOLUTIONS.

9. Q: MAURITANIA HAS JUST SENT EMISSARIES ABROAD TO
EXPLAIN THE SITUATION. HAS IT BEEN THOUGHT AT ANY
MOMENT THAT THE MOROCCAN MILITARY FORCE WHICH IS IN
MAURITANIA COULD BE REPLACED BY AN INTER-AFRICAN
FORCE OR SOME OTHER FORCE ACCEPTABLE TO ALL THE PARTIES
OF THE REGION?

10. A: I THINK YOU ARE GOING TOO FAR AND ARE ANTICI-
PATING EVENTS THAT HAVE NOT BEEN FORESEEN. FOR THE
MOMENT, CERTAINLY, THE MCNR HAS SENT EMISSARIES, A
MISSION OF EXPLANATION TO THE GROUP OF FRIENDLY
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COUNTRIES, AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO SEND THEM AS LONG
AS OUR POSITION HAS NOT BEEN EXPLAINED TO ALL OUR

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FRIENDS. BUT THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THAT AND
SEARCHING FOR OTHER INTERPRETATIONS. THE MOROCCAN
TROOPS ARE IN MAURITANIA AT THE WILL OF THE MAURITANIANS
AND AT THE REQUEST OF MAURITANIA. AND THE KING, HIS

MAJESTY HASSAN II, HAS ALWAYS SAID TO WHOEVER HAS WANTED TO LISTEN TO HIM THAT THOSE FORCES ARE THERE FOR MAURITANIA AND THAT WHEN MAURITANIA DOES NOT FEEL THAT NECESSITY HE IS DISPOSED TO WITHDRAW THEM. I THINK, FURTHERMORE, THAT THOSE FORCES ALREADY COST HIM ENOUGH WHERE THEY ARE SO THAT IN EFFECT THAT SACRIFICE BEING MADE FOR NECESSITIES OF WAR CANNOT BE INTERRUPTED IF THIS IS NECESSARY. FOR THE MOMENT WHAT WE HOPE AND WHAT WE DESIRE IS THAT PEACE BE GENERALIZED IN THE ENTIRETY OF THE ZONE.

11. Q: IN THE LONG TERM, DOES MAURITANIA BELIEVE IT SHOULD COOPERATE WITH ALL THE PARTIES OF THIS REGION, INCLUDING THE SAHRAWIS?

12. A: THAT IS THE HOPE OF ALL THE PEOPLES, AND IT IS ILLUSORY, IN MY OPINION, TO BELIEVE THAT IT IS POSSIBLE
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TO DRAG OUT ETERNALLY THE DIFFERENCES, THE DIVERGENCES AND THE OPPOSITIONS WITHIN A ZONE WHERE EVERYTHING CONTRIBUTES TO UNITY, WHERE EVERYTHING CONTRIBUTES TO REACHING AGREEMENT. IF IN A GIVEN MOMENT IN HISTORY THERE ARE CLOUDS THAT PASS OVER RELATIONS BETWEEN PEOPLES, THAT IS NO REASON FOR THE CONFLICT TO ENDURE AND BE ETERNAL. WE HAVE SEEN GRAVER CONFLICTS, WARS WHICH HAVE INVOLVED THE ENTIRE WORLD AND WHICH NEVERTHELESS HAVE ENDED. I THINK THAT HERE THERE CERTAINLY EXISTS A CASE WHICH IF IT HAD NOT BEEN UNDULY INFLATED WOULD NOT HAVE REACHED CURRENT PROPORTIONS. IT SHOULD NOW BE CARRIED TO ITS TRUE DIMENSIONS.

13. Q: IT IS A FACT THAT THIS HAS BEEN A COUP WITHOUT CONFLICTS. HOWEVER, WHAT WILL BE THE FATE OF THE EX-PRESIDENT AND THE MEMBERS OF HIS GOVERNMENT WHO ARE STILL DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM?

14. A: FOR THE MOMENT, THE MCNR AND THE GOVERNMENT HAVE MORE URGENT PROBLEMS TO DEAL WITH THAN THE FATE OF PERSONS THEMSELVES ABANDONED BY THEIR OWN FATE. THE MOST URGENT PROBLEMS ARE THOSE THAT CONCERN THE TOTALITY OF THE MAURITANIAN PEOPLE, AND WE WILL BEGIN WITH THEM. ONCE WE HAVE RESOLVED THOSE PROBLEMS WE WILL STUDY THE CASE OF THOSE PERSONS. THAT IS A PROBLEM WHICH DOES NOT ENTHUSE US, BUT AS YOU HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SEE, IT IS NOT A MATTER OF A SETTling OF ACCOUNTS AGAINST ANYBODY. IT IS SIMPLY A MATTER OF A STAGE OF HISTORY WHICH IT HAS BEEN NECESSARY TO CLOSE. LATER WE WILL SEE WHAT WILL HAPPEN WITH SOME ISOLATED CASES OF PERSONS WHO, SEEN IN THEIR ENTIRETY, DON'T COUNT.

15. Q: HOW ARE MAURITANIA'S RELATIONS WITH SPAIN,
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AND HOW COULD THEY EVOLVE? WHAT IS THE ATTITUDE OF
THE MAURITANIAN GOVERNMENT WITH RESPECT TO THE ISSUE
OF THE CANARIES WHICH THE OAU IS DEBATING?

16. A: I THINK THAT NOTHING HAS HAPPENED THAT REQUIRES
A MODIFICATION OF THE POSITION OF MAURITANIA TOWARD
SPAIN, UNLESS IT IS TO ADAPT IT AND PERHAPS-- WHY NOT?--
IMPROVE THE RELATIONS WHICH EXIST BETWEEN THE TWO
COUNTRIES. SPAIN CAN BE CONSIDERED A PARTICULAR
NEIGHBOR OF MAURITANIA BECAUSE IT HAS TIES OF EVERY
TYPE, IN PARTICULAR HISTORICAL ONES, WITH THE
AGGREGATE OF OUR PEOPLES. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT EVERY-
THING GOES IN THE DIRECTION OF GOOD RELATIONS WITH
SPAIN. FOR THE MOMENT, THE POSITION OF MAURITANIA
WITH RESPECT TO SPAIN AND ITS PROBLEMS HAS NOT BEEN
MODIFIED.

17. Q: DO YOU SEE IN THIS SEARCH FOR PEACE ANY ROLE
FOR SPAIN, GIVEN ITS RELATIONS WITH ALL THE PARTIES
IN THE REGION?

18. A: CERTAINLY IN THAT FRAMEWORK EVERY PARTICIPATION
IS NATURALLY USEFUL. I THINK THAT SPAIN, TO THE EXTENT
THAT IT COUNTS A CERTAIN NUMBER OF FRIENDS AMONG THE
COUNTRIES OF THE ZONE, CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE NECESSARY
PACIFICATION. FURTHERMORE, SPAIN, WHICH AFTER ALL
FORMS PART OF THE CONCERT OF FREE NATIONS, CAN, ON THE
LEVEL OF THESE INSTANCES, CARRY OUT AN ACTION THAT WOULD
PROBABLY BE EFFECTIVE. END TEXT. TODMAN

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